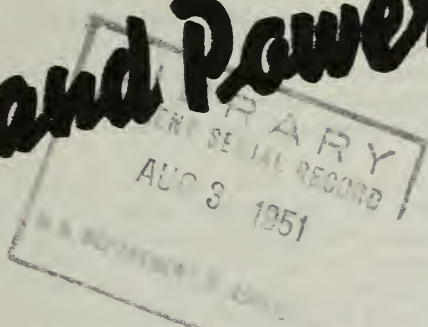


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1984 Pro
Cop 3

Mobilizing Our Land Power



We are getting from 70 to 80 percent of the practically possible yields of potatoes and truck crops; 50 to 60 percent of corn, wheat, and oats; and only 30 to 40 percent of pasture and hay. The wide gap between where we are and where we can be in pasture and hay production is a clue to where the most progress can be made in our efforts to step up total production.

United States
Department of Agriculture
Production and Marketing
Administration

MOBILIZING OUR LAND POWER

Increased production is needed from American farms. There must be more food and fiber to build and support a strong military, to meet the needs of expanding industry, to help meet the needs of those on our side, and to provide stock piles of storables as a protection against emergencies. This must be done while our population is increasing at the rate of 2 million each year, or more than the combined population of Vermont, Delaware, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho.

Greater and still greater farm production is not accomplished by waving a magic wand. The agricultural plant cannot be closed down for repairs and expansion. The food pipe line must always be full if there is to be food on the table every day. Practices to maintain and improve soil productivity must be carried on while the land is producing. Conservation is and must be an essential part of production.

Currently there are fairly large feed reserves. But livestock numbers are increasing and the stocks of corn and other grains will be reduced. For that reason, effort is being centered this year on increased production of feed grains, as well as of wheat, cotton, and other needed crops. At the same time, there is increased emphasis on farming and conservation practices based on the production of grasses and legumes, not only to relieve the pressure on grain feeds but also to step up the processes by which the soil is maintained for increased production in the future.

THERE IS PROGRESS

LEGUMES AND GRASSES, KEY CROPS

By turning under grasses and legumes as green manure, farmers are restoring organic matter to the soil and providing conditions necessary for vigorous plant growth.

They are using grasses and legumes to hold rainfall on the land. When the unprotected soil is pelted by raindrops, the surface becomes almost water tight. The water runs off, often carrying soil particles with it. Grasses and legumes break up the raindrops and check their force. The roots lead the water into the soil and help hold it there as in a sponge.

Farmers are using grasses and legumes as a plant food bank, the depository for the vital elements that make plant growth possible. Left unguarded in the soil, these elements leach out and wash away. When taken up by growing grasses and legumes they are protected, and when the plants are plowed under, the elements become available again for other plants. Legumes actually increase nitrogen-fixing bacteria that thrive on their roots.

And farmers are using grasses and legumes in pasture and hay crops to help conserve feed grain. With few exceptions, every pound of meat, milk, and other livestock products traces back to grass or grain. The better the grass the less grain is needed.

Grasses and legumes are the key to ample and continued production. By depending more on grass and less on grain to provide increasing livestock needs, soil-renewing and soil-improving rotations are being maintained.

Progress is being made. Since 1936, with the help of the Agricultural Conservation Program, more than 250 million tons of lime have been applied to more than 125 million acres to stimulate the sequence of soil-improving operations in which grasses and legumes play the vital part. In the same period and for the same purpose more than 20 million tons of phosphate have been applied to more than 150 million acres and about 35 million acres have been improved through the application of potassium, gypsum, and boron.

Up to 25 million acres are being protected and improved each year through cover crops turned under as green manure. In the 14-year period of program operation, more than 225 million acres of cover crops have been turned under to protect the land and maintain its fertility. In the same period more than 100 thousand miles of terraces have been built to protect soil on sloping land. Each year from 25 to 30 million acres of land are being protected from the damaging effects of wind and water, through such practices as contour farming, protected summer fallow, and crop residue management.

Up to 5¼ million acres of range and pasture have been reseeded in one year and other millions of acres of range and pasture land are being protected, improved, and utilized by deferred grazing, by the construction of dams and reservoirs, by the development of seeps, springs, and wells to provide water for livestock, and by planting, improving, and protecting forest trees.

HOW IT IS BEING DONE

The increased acreage devoted to Ladino clover and grass mixtures is a specific example of how the job is being done. Ladino is simply an improved, widely adapted, luxuriantly growing clover which provides feed throughout the growing season, particularly in the summer months when most other pasture crops dry up. Ladino clover seed production was only about 100 thousand pounds in 1937, but over 2-1/3 million pounds in 1949. Orchard grass is often planted with Ladino clover, and orchard grass seed production jumped from a little over 4 million pounds in 1937 to more than 8 million pounds in 1949. As a clue to what this means in acres, a mixture of 1 pound of Ladino and 10 to 12 pounds of orchard grass seeds one acre of land

Another yardstick of progress is the increased attention to preparation of the seedbed for sowing pasture and hay crops and the increase in soil testing to determine the needs of the soil for increased grass and legume production. In the State of Iowa alone in connection with Agricultural Conservation Program operations it is estimated that nearly 50,000 samples of soil will be tested by the Iowa Experiment Station in 1951 to determine the lime and fertilizer needs of the soils on farms carrying out program practices. In that State in 1949 more than 64 thousand farmers with the help of the program planted nearly 2 million acres of grasses and legumes as green manure and cover crops.

ACP THE SPEARHEAD

The Agricultural Conservation Program is the spearhead of the Nation's continued production effort. This program is carried on under the direction of farmer committeemen of the Production and Marketing Administration. There is a PMA committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture in every State, an elected committee in every county where agriculture is important, and an elected local committeeman in every agricultural community. The State PMA chairman is also chairman of the State Agricultural Mobilization Committee so that the Nation's conservation efforts are geared to current as well as future production needs.

With the aid of the Soil Conservation Service, the Forest Service, State agricultural colleges, and other agencies, the conservation needs of each county are reviewed. Conservation practices are decided upon and specifications drawn up. Each county and each State has its program adapted and fitted to the national program. Farmers carrying out approved practices as specified are reimbursed for a part of the out-of-pocket cost.

The county Production and Marketing Administration committee office is the source of information on local conservation practices.

*There is a PMA Office
In Every Farming County*